

Partition of Palestine

A LESSON IN PRESSURE POLITICS

BY

KERMIT ROOSEVELT

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The Institute of Arab American Affairs

160 Broadway, New York 7, N. Y.

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149014-13

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The Institute of Arab American Affairs acknowledges with gratitude the courtesy of the Middle East Journal of 1906 Florida Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C., for permission to reprint Mr. Roosevelt's article which appeared in its issue of January, 1948.



PREFACE

IT TOOK England more than a quarter of a century of pain and bitterness to adjust her Middle East policy to the political, economic and social evolution of the Arab East. Mr. Kermit Roosevelt's pleas for a similar adjustment in the United States policy is most timely and opportune.

Palestine is the core of that adjustment and the broad, far-sighted views of Mr. Roosevelt and others like him who possess an intimate knowledge of the Near East will prove valuable to all American citizens who want to be fair-minded and who are entitled to all the facts.

Long before oil, military strategy, economic and political interests became paramount in the life of the Middle East, the Arabs had faith and respect for American democratic institutions, our national character and our spirit of fair play.

An objective American approach to the Palestine problem will certainly repair the damage done by Zionism. It will, above all, uphold our cherished tradition of fair-mindedness.

KERMIT ROOSEVELT travelled widely throughout the Arab world, Turkey, and Iran for five months during the spring and summer of 1947. Through his conversations with both political leaders and the common people, he gained an intimate understanding of the Arab scene and of the role the United States is playing in the Middle East generally.

THE PARTITION OF PALESTINE

A Lesson in Pressure Politics

Kermit Roosevelt

PRIOR TO the entry of the United States into World War II, American interests in the Middle East were largely private interests and privately advanced. The commercial relations and philanthropic activities which American citizens and organizations had developed were such as to win for the United States a unique regard and respect, especially among the peoples of the Arab world. Some Americans have also, since World War I, given extensive financial and moral support to the Zionist cause in Palestine. As with American activity elsewhere in the Middle East, this support was offered, until recently, for humanitarian rather than political ends, and with little concern for the national interests of the United States. The disinterestedness of the American Government was generally recognized, and only the highest motives were attributed to it.

During World War II the position of the United States in the Middle East changed in two respects. First, its economic and strategic interests in the area assumed obvious and increased importance. A national Middle East policy became for the first time an imperative necessity. Secondly, American support of Zionism grew more and more official in character, committing not merely groups of American citizens but the government as well. At the same time, the cause supported came to be a political rather than a humanitarian one: this dual development climaxed in the aggressive support given by the United States Government and private citizens at the United Nations General Assembly to the proposed partition of Palestine and the creation of a Jewish political state.

Are these two processes—recognition of national interests in the Middle East and support of political Zionism—complementary or antagonistic? Almost all Americans with diplomatic, educational, missionary, or business experience in the Middle East protest

ferently that support of political Zionism is directly contrary to our national interests, as well as to common justice. How then is our policy to be explained? Parts of the explanation—perhaps the most interesting parts—are still well-kept secrets. But enough is already clear to make an instructive, and disturbing, story.

II

In 1922, by Joint Resolution, the United States Congress proclaimed "That the United States of America favors the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of Christian and all other non-Jewish communities in Palestine, and that the holy places and religious buildings and sites in Palestine shall be adequately protected."¹

This resolution differs in several respects from the Balfour Declaration.² For example, the American declaration fails to include specific protection of "the rights and political status enjoyed by the Jews in any other country." The most significant difference is that while the British promised to "use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of that object" [the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people], Congress simply "favors" it.

The United States also concluded a convention with Great Britain concerning Palestine in December, 1924, but its purpose was to assure to American citizens the same rights in Palestine as those granted to nationals of states belonging to the League of Nations.³ In conversations with British representatives and British Zionists, State Department officials made it clear that the United States Government considered Zionism as a private enterprise and nothing more.

In general this continued to be the position of the United States Government in the period between the wars. So long as Britain was strong in the Middle East, and so long as the political leadership of Zionism remained with English Jews, all the Zionists required from the United States was financial assistance from pri-

¹ Text in Esco Foundation for Palestine, *Palestine: A Study of Jewish, Arab and British Policies* (New Haven, 1947), vol. 1, p. 252.

² Text in *Ibid*; p. 107.

³ For text, see Department of State, *Mandate for Palestine* (Washington, 1931).

vate individuals and resolutions of support from the government.

However, Zionist need of United States support began to grow more acute during the nineteen-thirties as Britain's Palestine policy reflected a growing realization that full support could not be given the Zionists without damaging Arab interest and antagonizing not only Palestinian Arabs but the Arab States as well. In 1939, the British change in policy was expressed in a White Paper placing a definite limit upon Jewish immigration into Palestine, and seriously restricting the land purchase program of the Zionists already there.⁴ What the Zionists wanted first of all appeared to be American pressure upon the British: British action rather than direct American action, was still the main goal. But, as the course of war seemed to spell the end of Britain's imperial might, the Zionists decided Britain was too weak a reed on which to rely. Some turned to Russia, but the majority saw their greater hope in the United States. This trend became explicit in 1942 with the visit of Ben Gurion, Chairman of the Jewish Agency, Dr. Weizmann, and other Zionist leaders to the United States. On May 11, at an assembly of American Zionists in New York, the so-called "Biltmore Program" was approved. It called for the recognition of a Jewish Commonwealth and a Jewish army, urged that responsibility for immigration into Palestine be removed from Britain and vested in the Jewish Agency, and denounced the White Paper of 1939.⁵ Although many Jews in Palestine and the United States opposed the Biltmore Program,⁶ a committee of the General Council of the World Zionist Organization finally endorsed it by a large majority in November 1942. From that moment on the Zionists' efforts were directed toward making use of the United States as, in the past, they had made use of Great Britain.

Zionist pressure to this end was exerted systematically and on a large scale. In 1942 and 1943 resolutions supporting Zionism were introduced in numerous state legislatures. There being no organized opposition, and also no commitment binding the states to any given action, most of these resolutions were passed in routine

⁴ Great Britain, *Palestine, Statement of Policy*, Cmd. 6019 (1939).

⁵ Text in Esco Foundation, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 1084.

⁶ It is not within the scope of this discussion to trace the development of dissenting groups among the Zionists. Mention might be made, however, of the League for Arab-Jewish Rapprochement, active in fostering the bi-national concept; the Ihud founded in Jerusalem in 1942 under the leadership of Dr. Judah Magnes and committed to the same general principle; and in the United States the American Jewish Committee, following somewhat similar lines. At the opposite end of the Zionist scale were the Revisionist extremists: the New

fashion. This concerted Zionist drive to commit the United States by sheer number of resolutions included also the C. I. O. and the A. F. of L., as well as numerous religious and charitable bodies. Many Senators and Congressmen were induced to give support to Zionism, but a Congressional resolution on the subject was shelved in 1944 at the request of General Marshall. The Chief of Staff had inquired of our military attachés in the Middle East whether they thought its passage would damage the war effort. On the basis of their replies he concluded that reaction to the resolution would limit the military contribution which could be made from the Middle East to the invasion of France, for if it were passed British and other Allied troops, which could otherwise be used in establishing the Second Front, would be needed to maintain order there. The net result would be a greater drain on American troops and resources.

The proposed solution stated that "the United States shall use its good offices and take appropriate measures to the end that the doors of Palestine shall be opened for free entry of Jews into that country, and that there shall be full opportunity for colonization so that the Jewish people may ultimately reconstitute Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth."⁷ This was the first official resolution which would have involved expenditure of United States strength in support of Zionism. A few days after it had been tabled, President Roosevelt, following a visit from Zionist leaders, issued a statement supporting Zionist aspirations; but this, like the local state resolutions, involved no immediate action by the United States. Nevertheless, the President's statement marked a significant development. Hereafter, policy on Palestine began to be made in the White House, often against the express advice of the War, Navy, and State Departments, in which opposition to a policy committing the United States to support of Zionism continued, and perhaps increased.

The next step in the growing reliance of the Zionists on the United States was the substitution, in the Jewish Agency and

Zionist Organization and the Jewish State Party, both advocating the establishment of a Jewish state comprising Transjordan as well as Palestine. Opposition to a Jewish commonwealth, as outlined in the Biltmore Program, came also from anti-Zionist groups, notably the American Council for Judaism, which has consistently repudiated the concept of a Jewish political state in its entirety.

⁷ Text in Esco Foundation, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 1115. A similar resolution was finally passed by Congress in December 1945.

World Zionist Organization, of American for British leaders. This was not a wholly peaceable operation. Britain had been, and was still, the active agent of Zionism—the power responsible under the League of Nations mandate for the administration of Palestine. However, aside from the fact that British Zionists were at a disadvantage in appealing to American Jews, it was becoming clear that American Zionists, through the United States Government, could bring more pressure on the British Government than British Zionists either could or were willing to do. British Zionists would seem to have been aware—as, indeed, British citizens should be—to some extent at least of *British* as well as *Zionist* interests, and were frequently reluctant to urge their government to adopt courses of action advocated by the more aggressive Americans. It was becoming increasingly difficult for them to reconcile British over-all interests with the program of such extremists.

The result was that British Zionists became a moderating force in Zionism at a time when extremism was riding high. Their inhibitions as British citizens put them at a disadvantage compared to American Zionists, whose country had no such long established tradition of interests and politics in the Middle East. The climax of the struggle came at the Basle Conference in December 1946, when the conciliatory policy advocated by the grand old man of Zionism, British scientist Chaim Weizmann, was defeated. Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver's promises of American support carried the day—and the final vote of the UN Assembly proved his ability to deliver what he had promised.

Whether the campaign to gain American support was good either for Zionism or the Jewish community in general is still a question. The trend it took has widened the gap between Zionist Jews and those considerable numbers of American Jews who fervently oppose setting their race apart as a national group. The extensive publicity attendant upon the Zionist struggle also has made non-Jewish Americans increasingly conscious of the presence of Jews among them and has raised the specter of increased anti-Semitism. So far as their position in Palestine is concerned, the Zionists exchanged the protection of Great Britain and the British army for a United Nations recommendation which the United States, although voting in its favor, may be unwilling or unable to implement.

The answer depends in large measure on the extent to which

Zionist aims are beneficial or detrimental to the interests of the United States. For if the American public decides that Zionist pressure has forced this country into difficult straits, the reaction will be quick and unmistakable. The Zionists will then have lost their last powerful friend.

III

At the same time that American Zionists groups were assuming the lead in the fight for a Jewish state and endeavoring to commit the United States Government to its support, the pattern of American interests in the Middle East was being clearly outlined by the events of World War II.

The most dramatic of these was the near loss of the Middle East by the Allied forces to the Axis armies of General Rommel. The British victory at Al-Alamein was made possible in part by the American decision to send military supplies to Egypt at a time when MacArthur and the Russians were pleading for all we could send them. Both MacArthur and the Russians had powerful friends in Washington, but none could deny the tremendous importance of the Middle Eastern theater to the war as a whole.

German strategy was at fault in not allocating greater forces and material to the desert drive. But the German General Staff cannot be accused of underestimating the significance of the area. Captured documents show that the Germans had planned an overwhelming spring campaign in 1943 which was to give them control of the Persian Gulf. The German plans went no further; the General Staff was confident that once Germany held the Middle East, it would have won the war as a whole. With plenty of oil, and its enemies effectively split, the futility of further resistance would be plain to all.

Other captured documents show that to gain the Dardanelles and a foothold in the Middle East, Russia was willing in 1940 to join the Axis and in 1943 to sign a separate peace with Germany. But even then, when the Nazi decline was well underway, Berlin found these demands too steep. Post-war developments make it clear, however, that the Russians have not abandoned the goal. They have tried in Greece, in Turkey, and in Iran to advance toward it. Only the most determined opposition by Britain and the United States has held them in check. It seems logical to conclude that the Soviet support of the partition of Palestine repre-

sents Russia's most recent move toward that long established end.

If this conclusion be correct, as many observers believe, the Russian decision on partition was calculated to achieve three objectives: to strengthen the Soviet Union among Zionists everywhere; to gain a military foothold in the Middle East, on the assumptions that partition must be imposed by force and that force used for this purpose by UN must involve Russian participation; and most important, to ensure chaos and confusion in the Middle East by creating, against Arab opposition, a Jewish state surrounded by Arabs. A further reason is suggested by the tone of Russian speeches at UN, which seemed bent on establishing the *principle* of partition. They pleaded the right of a minority to separate itself from the majority and form its own state. Application of this principle to Azerbaijanis and Macedonians, to Kurds and Armenians and other Middle East minorities would suit the Soviets well. The Iron Curtain could be drawn over the Persian Gulf and the Eastern Mediterranean by process of partition as well as by any other means.

That the State Department took Soviet Russia into account when considering the Palestine question was one of the accusations made by Mr. Bartley Crum in recounting his experiences as a member of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in 1946.⁸ Yet the seriousness of this offense is difficult to comprehend. Surely an important State Department responsibility is to warn our top officials of pitfalls which will endanger American interests abroad.

If a position in the Middle East was essential to winning the war against Germany, we are now learning that it is equally essential to winning the peace against Soviet Russia. The strategic importance of the lands embracing the eastern Mediterranean cannot be exaggerated, for the area provides a base of operations at the hub of three continents. If an aggressive power became dominant in it, whether by conquest in time of war or by infiltration and revolution in time of peace, the security of a far wider zone would be threatened. The United States can fight against such an eventuality by taking direct action, as it has attempted to do in Iran, Turkey, and Greece, to block the spread of Russian influence toward the Middle East. It can also fight against it by following a policy calculated to assure the political stability and social and

⁸ Bartley C. Crum, *Behind the Silken Curtain* (New York, 1947), pp. 7-8, 31 ff.

economic advancement of the Middle Eastern peoples.

Among other factors which have assumed for the United States new and vital significance in the Middle East are its oil deposits. These deposits are generally recognized to be the greatest pool of oil in the world. If properly developed they could provide Europe with cheap power for the next century. Their importance in the Marshall plan has been clearly implied but not emphasized. The plan provides for the expenditure of over a billion dollars to reconstruct and expand Europe's refineries and other oil installations. These had best be supplied in large measure with Middle Eastern oil, because oil from there can reach Europe more cheaply than from the Western Hemisphere, and because its use would enable the nations of North and South America to save their resources against a day when no other supplies might be available to them.

Alongside the newer considerations of strategic and commercial interests stands the long tradition of American disinterestedness in the domestic political affairs of other peoples and its profession of democratic idealism, best expressed in the Middle East through the philanthropic work of private American organizations. It is very much in the national interest of the United States that the "reservoir of goodwill" engendered by such activity not be squandered. It is the very antithesis of American tradition to play a partisan role in fixing the political destiny of the Arab peoples, especially one in opposition to the expressed wishes of a population's majority. Millions of Middle Easterners regard our official sponsorship of a Jewish state in Palestine as "un-American"; persistence in such a policy will undermine the moral prestige of the United States in this area for years to come.

It is such considerations as these that are very much on the minds of American planners, and it is proper that they should be. They also pose a question which Americans, Zionists or otherwise, should ponder: Will the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine jeopardize the position of the United States in the Middle East? When all factors are taken into account it is difficult to arrive at anything but an affirmative answer, for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine would disrupt the Arab world and very possibly obstruct the development of democratic stability among the Arab peoples. It will undermine the American prestige among them for years to come, and—of more pressing concern—ease the path of Soviet infiltration.

IV

By early 1946 it was clear that the United States had acquired many of the same broad national interests in the Middle East that Britain had had for generations. Peace and security in the area having become important to us, it followed that we should logically share responsibilities there as well. But whereas British Zionists, out of their longer experience, have both perceived and attempted to reconcile the divergence between the welfare of Britain and the advancement of Zionism, recognition of the new situation has not led to a moderation of Zionism in the United States. Quite the contrary.

The end of the war had removed the military considerations which had blocked the 1944 Congressional resolution on Palestine. Universal sympathy for the distress and suffering of Europe's displaced persons heightened the emotional appeal of Zionism, although its opponents pointed out that only a portion of them were Jews. They questioned further whether Palestine, or countries such as Brazil, Australia, or the United States, could best provide homes for these refugees. They argued that there was no necessary connection between the humanitarian problems of succoring the displaced persons of Europe and the political problem of creating a new nationalistic state in Palestine. Finally, they asked whether it was just to make the Arabs atone for Europe's sins. However, the Zionists were not to be balked in their aims.

In May 1945 Zionist spokesmen at the San Francisco Conference, in furtherance of the Biltmore Program, urged that the United Nations immediately recognize a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. The UN did not place the item on its agenda, but in August 1945 a World Zionist Conference, meeting in London, endorsed the program and on August 31 President Truman wrote Prime Minister Attlee suggesting that 100,000 Jews be admitted to Palestine at once to relieve the suffering in Europe. Attlee rejected the suggestion, but proposed that an Anglo-American Committee be appointed to study the entire subject.

In April 1946 the Committee presented an unanimous report recommending the admission of 100,000 as suggested by President Truman and denying the exclusive claim of Arabs or Jews to a state in Palestine. The report rejected partition as a solution and proposed instead continuance of the mandate, "pending the execution of a trusteeship agreement under the United Nations," until

existing hostilities shall disappear. The ultimate form of government was vaguely described: "Jew shall not dominate Arab and Arab shall not dominate Jew," and the religious rights of Christian, Moslem, and Jew were to be protected in Palestine.⁹

Taken as a whole, the report was an honest effort to grapple with a difficult problem. But almost no one took it as a whole. Zionists found it generally unacceptable except for the recommendation that 100,000 Jews be admitted to Palestine immediately. It is interesting to note that President Truman's public comment singled out that particular recommendation for praise, together with two lesser aspects of the report also favorable to Zionism. Of the rest he remarked that it "deals with many other questions of long-range political policies and international law which require careful study and which I will take under advisement."¹⁰

Another aspect of the report is of great interest and, one hopes, of significance for the future. Certain American members of the Committee were reputed to be Zionist sympathizers before their appointment. Meeting as members of a responsible body representing the United States Government and, therefore, overall American interests, they joined in approval of a report which went in many respects contrary to Zionist policy. As responsible public officials, in other words, they determined *against* the creation of a Jewish political state in Palestine. Later, as private citizens exposed again to the pressures of political Zionism, they modified their stand. But this does not change, it rather underlines, the significance of the Committee's unanimous vote.

The British Government refused to discuss execution of only one of the Committee's proposals — the famous 100,000 — apart from the rest. Another group of Americans and British thereupon assembled in London to discuss ways of carrying out the whole report. In August they came out with a report of their own providing for a complicated cantonal arrangement, which was promptly rejected by Arabs and Zionists and buried with little comment by the American Government. The White House obviously disapproved.

Yet 1946 was an election year, and some stand would have to be taken. On October 4, President Truman issued a statement

⁹ For text and pertinent documents, see Department of State, *Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: Report to the United States Government and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom* (Washington, 1946).

¹⁰ *New York Times*, May 1, 1946, p. 14.

calling again for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews to Palestine. He also supported the Jewish Agency proposal for "the creation of a viable Jewish state in control of its own immigration and economic policies in an adequate area of Palestine. . . ." ¹¹

The story behind this statement is simple, and was partially reported at the time.¹² Messrs. Mead and Lehman, good Democrats, were waging a losing campaign for Governor and Senator respectively in New York State. Political leaders believe, though this has never been tested, that Zionists in New York would vote as a bloc and might win or lose an election. In the heat of the campaign, Mead and Lehman informed the White House that a statement favoring Zionism *must* be made immediately, for Dewey, Mead's opponent, was reported to be on the point of issuing one himself.¹³ The White House referred the matter for drafting to the State Department, but was not satisfied with State's first effort. Meanwhile New York called again: If President Truman did not issue a statement, Mead and Lehman would do so, publicly calling upon Mr. Truman to support it. Working under great pressure—domestic political pressure logically unrelated to Palestine—the October 4 statement was produced. It turned out to be one of the most disturbing and fateful ever made about Palestine.

It was disturbing because it emphasized, more dramatically than ever before, but not for the first or last time, the blatant way in which local political concerns may determine American foreign policy. Even the timing was obvious—not only close to election day, but on the eve of an important Jewish religious festival. Many Jews deplored this appeal to deep religious sentiment for obviously political purposes.

It was fateful because of its effect upon the British, who were patiently conducting meetings in London trying to work out a solution and whose negotiations were thrown into confusion by the unexpected intrusion. Mr. Bevin expressed himself strongly at the time, and feeling lingers on. A recent *New York Times* dispatch reports: "The British Government appears to feel that Britain had been well on the way toward a solution of the crisis there [in Palestine] on a cantonal basis when President Truman upset

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Oct. 5, 1946, p. 2.

¹² See the article by James Reston in *New York Times*, Oct. 7, 1946, p. 4.

¹³ On Oct. 6 Mr. Dewey called for the admission of "not 100,000 but several hundreds of thousands" of Jews into Palestine. *New York Times*, Oct. 7, 1946, p. 5.

the applecart by making his speech demanding the immediate entry of 100,000 Jews." ¹⁴ The effort to win New York votes by promises on Palestine convinced the British that they could not rely on responsible American action in support of a solution there. Once they had reached that conclusion, their withdrawal from the scene was inevitable.

The statement was fateful also because, in President Truman's mind, it committed the United States to thorough-going support of partition. Its genesis also re-emphasized the role that was to be allowed the State Department in the formulation of Palestine policy. Shortly after the statements appeared, White House officials warned that State Department personnel must not criticize their government's position. Later, Secretary Brynes was questioned on what he proposed to do about Palestine. He replied that he had nothing to do with it, he just carried messages.

The final act in the partition of Palestine was played out at the General Assembly of the United Nations in the fall of 1947. On October 11, our delegation declared itself, with a few reservations, in favor of the plan for partition as submitted by the UN's Special Committee. Its support was based on two assumptions: that Arab opposition would be negligible, and that the proposed Jewish state could be made a "going concern,"—despite the consensus of expert opinion that neither assumption was sound. After its decision was made, the delegation proceeded on the principle that other countries should be allowed to make up their own minds. This principle was modified, however, when it became apparent that if it were followed the partition plan would be defeated.

A straw vote taken in UN on Saturday, November 22, showed 24 states supporting partition, 16 opposed, and the rest abstaining or undecided. The American delegation was told at that point that the United States was committed to partition and that it must go through.

By Wednesday, November 26, when the vote was taken in committee, the result was 25 to 13—one vote gained for partition, three lost to its opponents, and the abstentions increased by two. That was still not enough for the two-thirds majority needed for passage.

So the Zionists took the fight into their own hands. Rallying a group of influential Americans and selecting their targets with

¹⁴ C. L. Sulzberger in *New York Times*, Dec. 8, 1947, p. 12.

care, they exerted all possible influence—personal suasion, floods of telegrams and letters, and political and economic pressure. Six countries which had indicated their intention of voting against partition were the chosen targets: Haiti, Liberia, the Philippines, China, Ethiopia, and Greece. All except Greece were either won to voting for partition or persuaded to abstain.

That these countries, and others as well, may have had sound reasons for voting against partition was no impediment. Aside from moral scruples about "self-determination" and the possible injustice of imposing partition on a country against the will of a majority of its inhabitants, there were hard political facts to be taken into account. For instance, some of the countries concerned have "pressure groups" which might prove as powerful in their own land as the Zionists in the United States. Haiti has a sizeable number of Syrian citizens. Liberia, China, and the Philippines have large numbers of Moslems among their populations. Ethiopia and Greece wish to be on good relations with their Moslem neighbors, who strongly oppose partition. But they are all small or weak countries; why should they be allowed the luxury of voting for interests which run counter to those of a powerful group in a powerful country like the United States?

The delegates of those six nations and their home governments as well were swamped with telegrams, phone calls, letters, and visitations. Many of the telegrams, particularly, were from Congressmen, and others as well invoked the name and prestige of the United States Government. An ex-Governor, a prominent Democrat with White House and other connections, personally telephoned Haiti urging that its delegation be instructed to change its vote. He spoke firmly, and might be presumed to speak with authority. A well-known economist also close to the White House, and acting in a liaison capacity for the Zionist Organization, exerted his powers of persuasion upon the Liberian delegate. Both states reversed themselves and voted for partition. How far our delegation was directly involved in this lobbying is hard to say, and it must have been even harder for the small nations and their representatives to put a true value on many of the tactics employed.

What happened at the United Nations was a repeat performance of what had already happened in the United States. Using the same methods that had been so successful here, and having the United States Government to assist in their use there, the Zion-

ists succeeded in getting what they wanted. The very pertinent question is, where do we go now?

Partition has been approved, but no method of enforcing it is provided. That problem, which will soon develop into a threat to peace, will fall within the jurisdiction of the Security Council. In other words, it will be subject to veto. The United States held the initiative for a time and produced partition. But because it was politically difficult to admit that Arab resistance would be strong, and even more politically difficult to commit United States forces to putting down that resistance, we have let the question slide—right into the Security Council and the veto. The initiative is lost. The gain? Further complication and exacerbation of an already bitter tangle, which must now be handled by a council that has rarely found agreement. The future of Palestine itself looks blacker than ever before, and meanwhile important American economic interests in the Middle East have been placed in jeopardy.

If the future of our position in the Middle East is dark, at least the lesson to be learned from the Palestine case is clear. The process by which Zionist Jews have been able to promote American support for the partition of Palestine demonstrates the vital need of a foreign policy based on national rather than partisan interests. A Palestine Zionist, indeed, may dismiss the Russian threat to the United States from his consideration, but an American may not, even if he is a Zionist. And as every American Zionist should think of himself as an American first, so should every Democrat and Republican. Only when the national interests of the United States, in their highest terms, take precedence over all other considerations, can a logical, farseeing foreign policy be evolved. No American political leader has the right to compromise American interests to gain partisan votes. The role the United States assumed in the Palestine question is not the responsibility of Zionists alone, but of each American citizen. The present course of world crisis will increasingly force upon Americans the realization that their national interests and those of the proposed Jewish state in Palestine are going to conflict. It is to be hoped that American Zionists and non-Zionists alike will come to grips with the realities of the problem.

[The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily express those of the Institute of Arab American Affairs.]

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